

2021 MHSA Football News Summary

Reciprocity for officials

Any Montana High School Association varsity contest (including football games held in Grenora, ND) must be officiated by MOA certified officials or by a member of the North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and/or Idaho officials' association who has paid reciprocity dues to the MOA.

Also, each MOA or non-MOA official who works MHSA contests (varsity or sub varsity – including football games in Grenora, ND) must complete the NFHS Concussion in Sports course each year.

XII. RECIPROCAL MEMBERSHIP IN BORDERING STATES

Members of the MOA can join as members of the officials association in the bordering states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and/or Idaho by paying dues of \$10.00 per sport to that/those particular state's organization. Dues must be paid before the official works a contest. This five-state agreement entitles members of each respective organization to officiate in any state(s) in which they maintain membership. Reciprocal arrangements with non-bordering states must be approved by the MOA office.

Sideline Management – Restricting the amount of sideline passes

Officials and coaches have had challenges lately with too many individuals located in the sideline area during their football games. Spectators realize that this is the best seat in the stadium and with more individuals migrating close to the field and watching the game directly on the sideline, it has created a problem. Allowing unauthorized spectators close to the field of play is a safety risk to players and coaches and can become a huge liability issue for schools and a game management issue for officials.

We have a variety of football facilities across the state. Many times a fence or a track separates the spectators from the field area, but regardless, MHSA Rules and Regulations requires that schools erect sideline barriers for all football contests. These barriers provide a clearly defined area where spectators must not enter. School administration should create sideline passes that only allow authorized school personnel or legitimate media members to be in the sideline area during games. Also, in order to manage the sideline easier, these people should be given a pass that is on a lanyard which is easily seen by game administration. It also provides the opportunity for game administration when distributing the pass to reinforce the areas they can be located during the game (see below).

These authorized personnel and media should never be allowed inside restraining lines (dotted line 2 yards around the perimeter of the field) or in the team box area (25 yard line to 25 yard line one all fields) and should not be watching in the end zones.

By cleaning up the sideline area, this will help everyone involved with managing the game.

Attempting the Try?

With the post season fast approaching, we have had several questions regarding end of the game procedures. The question is if a team scores on the last play of the game or when a team scores on the last possession to win the game in overtime, should a try be attempted? Rule 8-3-1 states the following:

ART. 1 . . . After a touchdown, the scoring team shall attempt a try during which the ball is snapped from a spot designated by A anywhere between the hash marks on B's 3-yard line, unless moved by penalty. This involves a scrimmage down which is neither numbered nor timed.

EXCEPTION: If a touchdown is scored during the last down of the fourth period, the try shall not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game or **playoff qualifying**.

Note the Exception in this rule states that the try should not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying. Officials **must** instruct the scoring team that they are to attempt the try because officials do not and should not have any idea what the post season tie breaking procedure is for each classification or conference. If the scoring team informs the officials that they will not be attempting the try; the game is over and the try is not to be attempted.

Halftime Intermission – Homecoming and Parents Night

Remember, football coaches must be back on the field or be on their way to the field before the twelve-minute half-time is expired. It is important to communicate that game management should notify both teams when there are three minutes left in the intermission.

Schools, however, do have the option of using longer half-times because of homecoming or parent's night, and officials should encourage this option for homecoming and parent's night. By NFHS rule, half times can be extended up to twenty minutes, provided the opposing coaches have been notified five minutes prior to the game. Remember, the additional three minute warm-up period is always mandatory.

Player Introductions

In response to sportsmanship concerns and the need for a suitable, consistent process of introducing football players at contests, the MHSAA Athletic Committee has made a recommendation to schools that they use the suggested format described below at playoff and state championship games:

1. Coach/AD presents starting lineups to announcer well before the ceremony is to begin.
2. Those people selected as starters would line up on their respective 20 yard lines.
3. When a player is introduced, the player goes to the center of the field (50-yard line), shakes hands with opposing team member who has been introduced, and then returns to their respective 20-yard lines.
4. Coach(es) are last to be introduced and after their introduction (when they shake hands) players go to their sidelines.
5. PLAY BALL!

Official Football of the MHSAA - Wilson WTF1003B GST

The Montana High School Association has agreed to a new multi-year contract with Wilson to be the Official Football of the MHSAA. Rawlings has been the MHSAA official football for the Montana High School Association for many years but after reviewing coaches' and schools' input on product and after examining each proposal carefully, the MHSAA has entered into a six-year contract with Wilson as the MHSAA official football provider. Wilson will provide a game ball to be used for all post season football contests during the contract.

The Wilson WTF1003B GST will be the Official Football of the MHSAA. This is one of the most highly rated footballs available on the market today. Per the contract, one of these footballs will be shipped to each post season football game.

Football Requirements – 2020-2024 - Beginning in 2020, a Wilson football will be required in all MHSAA state playoffs and championship contests. Schools **MUST** use the Wilson WTF1003B GST Football or any other Wilson leather, composite leather or rubber football in all state playoffs and championships. Schools do not have to use the brand-new Wilson Football that is mailed to each site week. Game officials will only allow Wilson footballs during the 2020 post season.